

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we see that day soon when we see democracy and unity for all of Cyprus.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as National Firefighter Memorial Weekend approaches, I rise to pay tribute to our Nation's fallen firefighters; and I am pleased that a number of my colleagues have joined me in legislation on this and may come later in the evening to speak in favor of this bipartisan legislation that we have introduced on behalf of our fallen firefighters.

Last year, America tragically lost 442 firefighters. Each gave their lives protecting our communities from fire and other emergencies. This weekend, on October 5 and 6, we will join together as a Nation to mourn their passing and honor their sacrifices. So it is fitting that we come to this floor today to honor the memory of our fallen firefighters and say thank you to those brave folks who have served our community so well.

Mr. Speaker, firefighters truly embody the value and spirit that makes America what it is today, a great Nation. Firefighters are diverse, they represent every race and creed and culture in America, yet they are bound by a common commitment to service. Firefighters are dedicated; and when we call them, they risk their lives for each of us. They are the people our children look up to. When we ask a child the timeless question, What do you want to be when you grow up?, nowadays, more often than not, those children will say, I want to be a firefighter.

Our firefighters are truly our hometown heroes. However, all too often these heroes must give their lives in the line of duty. For the families of these brave souls, Congress created the Public Safety Officers Benefit Act. Since its inception 25 years ago, this important benefit has provided surviving families with financial assistance during their desperate time of need.

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However, a glitch in the law prevents some families from receiving the assistance that Congress had intended. If a firefighter or public safety officer has a heart attack or stroke, then they are more likely not to get the benefit. The truth is it accounts for almost half of

all firefighter fatalities, yet the families of these fallen firefighters are rarely eligible for these benefits.

For example, imagine that a house or business catches on fire, a company of firefighters tragically lose two of their members fighting this fire. One loses their life as a result of a piece of debris hitting him within the building, and the other dies of a heart attack in the parking lot when they walk out of the building.

Under current law, the family of the firefighter who suffered a fatal blow to the head received the benefit, while the firefighter who walked out in the parking lot and had a heart attack, their family gets nothing. It is wrong that these families are denied this benefit when the loved one sacrifices their life while serving our community.

A constituent of mine, Mike Williams of Bunlevel, who works in the Office of the State Fire Marshal, alerted me to this glitch in the law after Ms. Deborah Brooks, the widow of Thomas Brooks, a firefighter from Lumberton, was denied benefits because of this technicality. Mr. Brooks, a master firefighter, tragically died of a heart attack after running several calls on the evening shift. As part of his duties with the State Fire Marshal's office, Mike helps families fill out public safety officer benefits, and he had received many of these benefit rejection letters from cardiac cases from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The rejection letter in Thomas Brooks' case was one too many, and Mike wrote to me and asked that we investigate the situation. We found out that it would take legislation to do it. As a result, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), who are cochairmen of the Firefighters Caucus, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) along with many others, have introduced H.R. 5334, the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act. H.R. 5334 will correct this technicality in the law that has penalized so many of our firefighting families.

This bipartisan legislation will provide this benefit to the families of public safety officers who have died after a heart attack or a stroke while on duty, or within 24 hours after participating in a training exercise or responding to an emergency situation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5334 is the kind of bipartisan legislation that we should be working on in this House. As of this afternoon we have 50 cosponsors, and more cosponsors on the way. I urge Members to cosponsor H.R. 5334, and I ask the House leadership to put this bill to a vote before this Congress adjourns. Our firefighters put their lives on the line where strength, heart and desire are sometimes the only thing that ensures that a piece of property or a house that is burning down can be saved. Our hometown heroes deserve our support. Let us let them know that we appreciate their bravery and heroism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIBERI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support full funding for the "No Child Left Behind" Act (H.R. 1). The new little red schoolhouse entrances to the Department of Education building are a perfect example that the Administration is "all show and no tell" when it comes to education. By building those little red schoolhouses, at a cost of \$98,000, at least 160 children have already been left behind by the Administration's cuts in education funding. The Bush Administration thinks that the American people will see those schoolhouses and believe that the Nation's children are in good hands under the Bush education system.

The American people know better. Americans will notice when after school programs are no longer available for their children. Americans will notice when their special needs children cannot get extra help from their own community schools.

Americans will notice when their teachers become frustrated because they can't get the training they need to provide the best quality instruction to their students. Americans will notice when these same teachers have to leave their students because they can't get the training required to meet the Administration's new accountability standards. Americans will notice when their kids can't receive as much in student loans, and don't have access to scholarships for low-income students. And, Americans will notice when their kids who need help with their English skills are falling behind because their schools no longer provide training in English.

Since 1997, the average increase in Federal education funding has been 12 percent a year—until now.

The Bush Administration proposes to increase Federal funding by only 0.5 percent, but flaunts the "No Child Left Behind" Act as its first big accomplishment.

If leaving millions of children out in the cold when it comes to their education is an accomplishment, then dark times lay ahead.

The Bush Administration has slashed about 82 percent of the budget increase promised by the "No Child Left Behind" Act for low-income students.

The President's budget cuts the expected increase for low-income students from \$5.65 billion to only \$1 billion extracted from other important programs.

Low-income students can expect to lose over \$664 million in badly needed funds.